

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION

CLAIMS NOs: HC11C01420 and HC11C02065

BETWEEN:

JUDE LAW

Claimant

and

(1) NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED
(2) GLENN MICHAEL MULCAIRE

Defendants

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Solicitor Advocate for the Claimant

1. In these actions for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment, I appear for the Claimant. My learned friend, Michael Silverleaf QC, appears for the First Defendant.
2. The Claimant is a well-known professional actor, who has appeared in numerous motion pictures as well as on the stage, both in this country and abroad.
3. The First Defendant was the publisher of the News of the World newspaper which, until its recent closure, enjoyed a considerable readership in this jurisdiction and which also published its content on its website www.newsoftheworld.com. The Second Defendant was a private investigator employed by the First Defendant to carry out various investigative activities including the blagging of information from mobile phone companies and elsewhere and the unlawful interception of voicemail messages.
4. From around early 2003 until at least 2006, there were a number of articles published in the News of the World about the Claimant, which contained intrusive and private information. Although these articles contained a lot of inaccurate information, the articles, for the main part, contained at least a grain of truth which the Claimant did not know the source of. As a consequence, the Claimant could not understand how this private information was ending up in the public domain. One article, which was published in 2003, even referred to phone calls that the Claimant's assistant had made to the Claimant on arrival at an airport.

5. As a consequence of these articles, the Claimant started to become concerned about the security of his mobile telephones and his communications. In addition to this, over the same period, the Claimant experienced unusual activity on his mobile phone including hang up calls and new messages appearing as old messages. A number of his friends and family also experienced similar suspicious activity.
6. The Claimant also noticed that journalists and/or photographers appeared to know his location in advance. This meant that when he turned up at meetings or a planned location, there were often journalists and photographers already present.
7. In the light of these concerns, the Claimant changed his mobile phone a number of times and also registered his mobile phone under the name of others. The Claimant also hired security consultants to undertake a sweep of his car and house in order to ensure that no bugs had been installed. Despite all these precautions, articles still appeared in the News of the World and other papers concerning the Claimant's private life and the private lives of his friends and family. This caused further distrust and suspicion between the Claimant and those close to him.
8. In June 2010, the Claimant discovered that several of his mobile numbers and his direct dial numbers appeared in the evidence that Sienna Miller had obtained from the Metropolitan Police pursuant to the disclosure order made by Mr Justice Sweeney on 1 June 2010.
9. Furthermore in early 2011, after the commencement of Operation Weeting, the Claimant was approached by the Metropolitan police and was shown evidence that his voicemail messages had been intercepted as well as other confidential information. In addition to this, the Claimant was played a number of recorded messages that he had left over 5 years ago on the voicemail service of his children's nanny, Jade Schmidt. It was clear from the evidence shown to him by the Police that the Claimant was targeted over a considerable period of time, from at least 2003-2006. The subsequent disclosure from the First Defendant has confirmed this.
10. In May 2011, the Claimant issued proceedings against the First and Second Defendants for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment. The Claimant served detailed Particulars of Claim, which contained complaints about the publication of at least 16 articles, from January 2003 until August 2006, based on intercepted voicemail messages. Both Defendants indicated their intention to defend the entire claim and served Defences.
11. In its Defence, the First Defendant made a number of specific admissions although it refused to admit or denied that the Claimant had been harassed or that the articles published were private or derived from intercepted messages. Since then, on 13 December 2011, the First Defendant has made a series of extensive general admissions in relation to the interception of voicemail messages.

12. It has become clear, and the First Defendant now accepts, that the Defendants targeted the Claimant and the Claimant's voicemail messages over a considerable period of time, from at least January 2003 until 2006, including messages which he left on the voicemail services of his family, friends and employees.
13. The First Defendant also accepts that, in addition to electronic surveillance, the Claimant was subjected to repeated and sustained physical surveillance over a number of years, until at least April 2007. In fact, the Claimant was regularly followed and pursued in this country and abroad by representatives of the First Defendant. He was also door stepped and put under watch at his home. Over the years, the First Defendant has also persistently sought and obtained private information about the Claimant and his friends and family through blagging.
14. It has also become clear, and the First Defendant now accepts, that a lot of this unlawfully acquired information has ended up in the numerous articles that have been published about the Claimant between 2003 and 2007. The First Defendant also accepts that this private information has often been inaccurate or it has been distorted or misrepresented.
15. The effect of this sustained campaign of surveillance, pursuit and harassment, as well as the publication of intrusive and private information, has been profound. It has caused the Claimant considerable distress and has caused distrust and suspicion between his friends, family and employees.
16. I am here today to announce that the First Defendant has accepted liability unconditionally for all of the Claimant's claims against the News of the World.
17. Furthermore, both Defendants have also undertaken not to further unlawfully access the Claimant's voicemail messages or unlawfully access other private information concerning the Claimant or to republish the private information contained in the 16 articles complained of or otherwise harass the Claimant or put him under surveillance.
18. The Claimant has also taken legal proceedings against the Defendants in relation to The Sun newspaper for, amongst other things, the publication of a number of similarly intrusive articles about his private life.
19. In the light of the admissions made by the First Defendant which I have mentioned, it has agreed to pay damages to the Claimant in respect of all of the claims that he has made in the sum of £130,000, and also to pay all of the legal costs that he has been forced to incur.

Counsel for the First Defendant

20. My Lord, on behalf of the First Defendant I confirm everything my friend, Mr Thomson, has said.
21. The First Defendant acknowledges that it is liable for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment of the Claimant and admits unconditionally all of his claims against the News of the World.
22. In particular, it accepts that the methods which were used to obtain private information about the Claimant, including the unlawful accessing of his voicemails and the blagging of private information, should never have been employed. The First Defendant further accepts that there was no legitimate justification whatsoever for this unlawful activity or for the publication of these articles about the Claimant's private life, whether based on information obtained through these methods or not. It further accepts that the 16 articles complained of were based or derived from, at least in part, intercepted voice mail messages.
23. The First Defendant is here today, through me, to offer its sincere and unreserved apologies to the Claimant for the damage, as well as the considerable distress, caused to him, and those close to him. In particular, the First Defendant apologises for the unlawful interception of the Claimant's voicemail messages and the blagging of information about him, from a variety of sources, for the sole purpose of obtaining private and confidential information to publish.
24. The First Defendant also accepts that the articles printed in The Sun Newspaper about the Claimant's private life were a misuse of his private information.
25. In addition to agreeing to pay the Claimant a substantial sum by way of damages, as well as legal costs, the First Defendant is undertaking to the Court that it will not do any of the following acts in the future, namely to republish the articles or the private information complained of; to intercept the Claimant's voicemail messages; to put him under physical or electronic surveillance; or to blag private information about him or his family.

Solicitor Advocate for the Claimant

26. In such circumstances, the Claimant believes that he has achieved everything which he set out to achieve through the pursuit of these proceedings and on these terms he is prepared to resolve his claims against the First Defendant.


Mack Thomson


Michael Silverleaf QC